

Women's Health



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Table of Contents

Breast Cancer
Heart Disease
Pregnancy
Tests you need as you age
Daily Diet and Exercise
Osteoporosis
Cervical Cancer
Stress Management
Menopausal Issues
Depression

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Preventing Breast Cancer

We have all known someone who has suffered from breast cancer, whether it is a family member or a friend.

Don't forget your self-exams!

When examining your breasts, look in the mirror for breast changes. Stand in three positions: first one arm, then the other, over your head, arms placed at your sides and then hands on hips with chest muscles squeezed. Squeeze each nipple gently to check for discharge.

Lie on your back with a pillow under your left shoulder, left arm behind your head. With your right hand, circle the outside of the left breast, feeling for lumps. Then switch and check the right breast.

In the shower, raise right arm over your head and check right breast with left hand then switch.

What to do if you find something

If you find something, don't hesitate to call your doctor. Keep track of what information he or she tells you. Have the lump tested. If you're not satisfied, insist on a second opinion.

Risk factors

A family history of breast cancer, early menstruation, late menopause, and obesity have all been linked to a higher incidence of breast cancer. The risk increases with age. Additionally, women who have not been pregnant and women who have been exposed to radiation have an increased risk. Caucasian women have a higher incidence compared to African-American women. However, the incidence is increasing among African-American women under age 60.

Tests Available

Mammogram: a basic x-ray of the breast, may not be as effective with young women

Ultrasound: an image is created with sound waves. The image allows doctors to distinguish between fluid-filled lumps (usually benign) and solid lumps (sometimes cancerous)

Biopsy: removal of cells, fluid or tissue from the breast for further testing

Resources for more information

- Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation, 1-800-462-9273
- American Cancer Society, 1-800-227-2345



- 1 out of 8 women will develop breast cancer

- Every 3 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer

- Every 12 minutes, a woman dies from breast cancer in the United States

- Breast cancer can be successfully treated when detected early

Keys to prevention

- Eat healthfully, including fruits and vegetables and limiting high-fat foods
- Be physically active
- Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages
- Stop smoking
- Always wear sunscreen

Heart Disease

- Heart disease is the number one killer.
- 42% of all deaths in Indiana are caused by heart disease, almost double the number of deaths caused by AIDS, cancer and all accidents combined.
- Cardiovascular disease costs the United States about \$274.2 billion annually.

Keys to prevention

- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise

One in ten American women age 45 to 64 has some form of heart disease. This increases to one in four women over age 65.

These numbers are especially distressing for women because the symptoms of heart disease in women are more likely to be brushed off as something other than a heart attack.

What is different about women & heart disease?

The symptoms women experience when having a heart attack are oftentimes very different from what is called the “male model” of a heart attack. Heart disease is underrecognized, underdiagnosed and undertreated by women patients and by some physicians.

Symptoms of heart attacks in women include:

- shortness of breath
- pain in the abdomen, in the back, in the jaw or in the throat
- a sensation of uneasiness or feeling “sick” that is difficult to describe
- other “traditional” symptoms, including chest pain

Risk Factors

- age
- family history
- diabetes
- race -- African-American women have the greatest risk of heart disease of any gender or ethnic group, with heart disease as their number one cause of death after age 25
- cholesterol levels
- estrogen, the female hormone, is a powerful deterrent to Heart Disease
- smoking
- high blood pressure
- lack of physical activity
- obesity, particularly in the stomach area



Resources for more information

- American Heart Association, 1-800-AHA-USA1
- Indiana Heart Association, (317) 876-4850, 1-800-229-1503
- Women's Health Information, 1-888-MY-HEART
- www.womensheartinstitute.com/

So You Want To Have a Baby?

Once you have confirmed you are pregnant, continue taking your prenatal vitamins. Follow a healthy diet and exercise regularly. You may experience fatigue, nausea and frequent urination in the first several months. Call your doctor if you experience cramping, spotting or bleeding, which may indicate early miscarriage; lower abdominal pain, continual vomiting, gushing or steady leaking of fluid from vagina, painful or sparse urination.

As you ease into your second trimester, you will begin to show. Around this time morning sickness usually subsides and your appetite increases. You only need about 300 extra calories per day. You also will start to experience fetal movement, lower abdominal achiness, backache, leg cramps, indigestion and bloating. Call your doctor if you notice an absence of fetal movement for more than 12 hours.

Once you enter the third trimester, you may experience disrupted sleep due to the difficulty of finding a comfortable position. you may begin to experience shortness of breath, scattered “Braxton-Hicks contractions” and varicose veins. Support panty hose may help ease discomfort. You may notice a return of your early-pregnancy fatigue. Frequent naps may help. Call your doctor if you experience steady, painful contractions that may signal early labor, a sudden decrease in fetal movement, leaking fluid from vagina or a burning sensation during urination.

In the ninth month your “nesting” instinct will increase -- you may find yourself spending a lot of time shopping for baby clothes. As your due date approaches, pack your overnight bag for the hospital. You will continue to have difficulties sleeping. Call your doctor if your water breaks, if you experience increasingly more frequent and intense contractions that are not relieved by changing position, lower-back pain spreading to abdomen and legs, nausea, diarrhea, pink or bloodstreaked mucus leaking from vagina, contractions that last 45 seconds and occur more frequently than every five minutes.

Resources for more information

- March of Dimes: (914) 428-7100 www.modimes.org
- www.stanford.edu/~holbrook/ – discusses the tests your doctor may request
- www.fitpregnancy.com/ -- a step-by-step guide detailing what to expect and how to have a healthy pregnancy
- www.babyzone.com/ -- a variety of information, including baby names!
- pregnancytoday.com/



Healthy moms lead to healthy babies

Follow these steps, both before and during your pregnancy to help you baby have a healthy start in life:

Nutritious diet
Regular exercise
Visit your doctor
Prenatal vitamins -- including folic acid

Things to Avoid

The first few weeks in the life of your baby are vital in the creation of major organs and systems, including the brain. To keep your baby safe try to avoid the following:

Cigarettes
Alcohol
X-rays
Hot tubs, Saunas
Toxic Chemicals
Infections -- especially rubella

Signs of Pregnancy

While a pregnancy test is the only way to be certain you are pregnant, you may experience some of the following signs in the weeks following conception:

Breast tenderness
Nausea
Fatigue
Missed menstrual period
Frequent urination

Preventing the Spread of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

If you are not engaging in a monogamous sexual relationship, always USE A CONDOM!

Extremely High Risk Activities include anal sex and vaginal sex.

Medium Risk Activities include oral sex.

Low Risk Activities include any behaviors which allow direct skin on skin contact.

No Risk Activities include not having sex (abstinence) talking fantasizing

<http://www.bu.edu/cohis/aids/sympsign.htm>

If you suspect you may have an STD, do not hesitate to contact your healthcare provider. Treatment is the only way to stop the spread of disease and protect your body.

AIDS : AIDS is a set of diseases and symptoms that a person gets years after being infected with HIV. HIV destroys your immune system -- your ability to fight infection. It takes between three and ten years for a person infected with HIV to develop AIDS. People who are infected with HIV are said to be "HIV-positive". HIV is transmitted through the exchange of bodily fluids, such as blood, semen, vaginal fluids, and breast milk. There is medical treatment available to slow down the virus, but **THERE IS NO CURE.**



Chlamydia: Symptoms include a small, clear discharge from the urethra. Chlamydia is easily treated with various antibiotics. In women, chlamydia can have very serious consequences. It can cause a deadly, painful infection called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID).

Gonorrhea Symptoms of gonorrhea include a pus-like yellow discharge from the penis and a sting sensation when you urinate. Some women experience redness on the cervix, discharge from the vagina, pain in the pelvic area, and frequent urination. Gonorrhea is completely curable if you take antibiotic medication.

Viral Hepatitis: Three viruses that infect the liver: Hepatitis A Virus (HAV), Hepatitis B Virus (HBV), and Hepatitis C Virus (HCV). Hepatitis A is spread through anal contact. Hepatitis B is spread through the exchange of bodily fluids. Hepatitis C begins with flu-like symptoms. After the virus moves to the second stage, the lymph nodes in your body swell and liver damage occurs. Hepatitis is curable with prescription drugs.

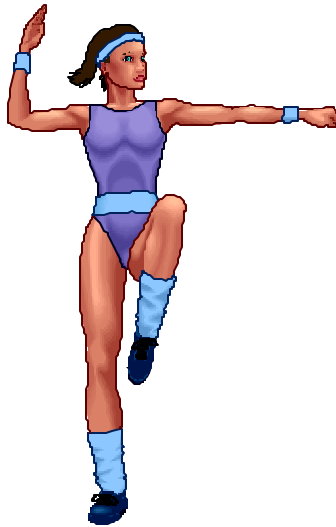
Herpes Simplex: There are two types of the herpes virus: type I and II. Type I generally is found on the lips, and type II is found more often on the genitalia, but the two viruses can easily infect any mucous membranes. Herpes is transmitted through skin-on-skin contact from kissing to more intimate contact. Herpes can be treated, but **it can not be cured.**

Syphilis: Syphilis can be transmitted through sex or other intimate skin contacts. The first sign of syphilis is a big, open sore called a chancre. Chancres only last a couple weeks, but the disease continues to inhabit your body. Syphilis is easily and completely curable with antibiotics.

Daily Diet and Exercise

How many times must we be told to exercise? Many women think they can just take off weight by starving themselves. Sorry, It doesn't work that way.

Living a healthy lifestyle includes diet and exercise. Those who are inactive increase their likelihood of becoming overweight. They are also missing important opportunities to improve their health, reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, and maintain their bone strength through weight-bearing or strength-training exercise.



Smart Serving Sizes

Sometimes what we think is a small portion of food really isn't. In the shaded area to the left are some suggested serving sizes.

Exercising and getting yourself motivated is sometimes half the battle. Here are some tips to motivate yourself:

“Rules of Motivation”

Prepare to take detours to get from Point A to Point B.

Use the stairs for short trips.

Patience, patience, patience.

Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day.

Maintain momentum.

If you start an exercise program and then you “cheat” through the week, don't just give up! Start again the next day.

Gain control from the inside out or...self empowerment.

Only you can change what you look like.

Can that guilt.

If you get “off course,” get right back on it. Don't tell yourself that you will start again at the beginning of next week. Start your regimen again the very next day!

Develop Self Image.

If you are never going to be a Barbie doll, don't try for that. Try for what makes you happy.

Set Realistic Goals.

Try for reasonable weight loss, not too much in one week.

Smart Serving Sizes

Did you know that...

☞ *3 oz. of meat, poultry or fish is equal to a deck of playing cards or an audio cassette tape?*

☞ *1 cup of fruit or yogurt is equal to a baseball?*

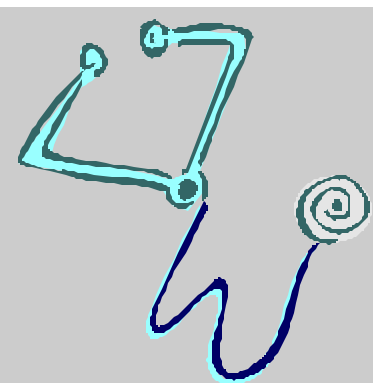
☞ *1 medium potato is equal to a computer mouse?*

☞ *1 standard bagel is equal to a hockey puck?*

☞ *2 tablespoons peanut butter is equal to a golf ball?*

☞ *1 slice of cheese is equal to a 3.5 inch computer disk?*

☞ *1/2 cup of cooked veggies is equal to 6 asparagus spears, 7-8 baby carrots, 1 ear of corn, or 3 spears of broccoli?*

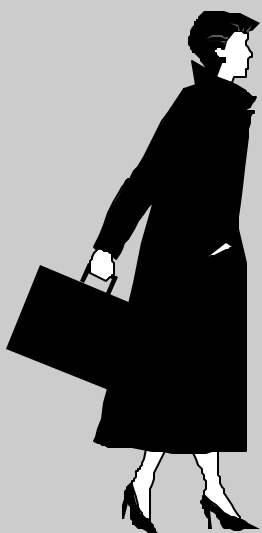


Symptoms:

- ↳ Abnormal vaginal bleeding between menstrual periods
 - ↳ after intercourse
 - ↳ after douching
 - ↳ after menopause
- ↳ Persistent vaginal discharge

Advanced Symptoms:

- ↳ Anorexia (loss of appetite)
- ↳ Weight loss
- ↳ Fatigue
- ↳ Back pain or leg pain
- ↳ Involuntary loss of urine



Cervical Cancer

The Facts you should know

Cervical cancer is the third most common type of cancer in women.
~ American Cancer Society

New Cases:

An estimated 12,800 cases of cervical cancer are expected to be diagnosed in 1999. Incidence rates have decreased steadily over the past several decades, declining from 14.2 per 100,000 in 1973 to 7.4 per 100,000 in 1995.

Deaths:

There are an estimated 4,800 cervical cancer deaths in 1999. Mortality rates have also declined sharply over the past several decades. In 1991-1995, cervical cancer mortality rates have also declined significantly. This decrease was more apparent in older women.

Prevention:

Abstaining from sexual activity until after the age of 18, practicing monogamy, and safer sex behaviors all reduce the potential for cervical cancer.

Routine pelvic exams, including a Pap smear, should be performed yearly, beginning with the onset of sexual activity, or by the age of 20 in nonsexually-active women. Pap smears detect abnormalities in the cells of the cervix, thus alerting the physician that further tests may need to be done. Early detection allows treatment to begin before cancer has actually developed.

Signs and Tests:

A physical exam may show the cervix to be irregular, enlarged, firm, or friable (bleeds easily) in the later stages of cervical cancer. However, the cervix almost always looks normal in the early stages of the disease.

- Pap smears detects abnormal cells, dysplasia, or cervical cancer.
- Colposcopy to suggest cervical cancer and pinpoint areas of concern.
- Cervical biopsy confirms cervical cancer.

Certainly, a woman should consider having a Pap smear every year. Although it may seem very uncomfortable, the result of waiting may be much worse. Any questions about this disease should be directed to your gynecologist or to your family doctor.

Other sources:

The American Cancer Society - 1-800-227-2345
www.nccc-online.org - The National Cervical Cancer
Coalition Website

Osteoporosis

What is Osteoporosis? This is a disease that causes a loss of bone mass and deterioration of bone tissue, leading to enhanced bone fragility and an increase in the risk of fracture. This bone loss can be extensive. Osteoporosis often progresses painlessly until a bone breaks, usually in the hip, spine, or wrist. Women are four times more likely than men to develop the disease, mainly due to the loss of estrogen at menopause. Half of all women over age 65 are affected by osteoporosis.

Am I at risk for Osteoporosis?

Those at highest risk are women who:

are small and have thin body frames

- ☹ have suffered a broken bone after age 40
- ☹ are female
- ☹ are postmenopausal
- ☹ have inactive lifestyles with little or no exercise
- ☹ are Caucasian or Asian
- ☹ weigh less than average for their height
- ☹ have early menopause
- ☹ have a family history of osteoporosis
- ☹ have a diet low in calcium and vitamin D
- ☹ have a diet high in caffeine, alcohol, or protein
- ☹ have hormonal conditions like diabetes, hyperthyroid, or Cushing's disease
- ☹ smoke
- ☹ take thyroid or cortizone medications.



Remember, living a healthy lifestyle, including weight-bearing exercise, can significantly reduce one's risk for osteoporosis, but a healthy lifestyle alone will not be enough for many women.

Dealing with the negative effects of reduced estrogen may require other options to be determined by each woman and her physician. Don't be afraid to speak to your physician.



Tips for Prevention

Osteoporosis is more common than it should be. Although we don't know how to completely stop bone loss, we can take steps to prevent many of the fractures. Although some women will undoubtedly have osteoporosis, the majority of women can take some of the following steps to help in the prevention of osteoporosis.

☺ ***Drink lots of milk.***

☺ ***Eat foods rich in calcium, such as yogurt, cheese, and ice cream.***

☺ ***Don't smoke.***

☺ ***Limit alcoholic beverages.***

☺ ***Do weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, hiking, and stair climbing.***

Stress Management

Helping you think your way to an excellent life!

Stress can be anything that stimulates you and increases your level of alertness. Life without a small form of stimulus would be incredibly dull and boring. On the other hand, life with too much stimulus becomes unpleasant and tiring. You may even damage your health in the process. Too much stress can seriously interfere with your ability to perform at your peak and effectively as well.



The key to stress “management” is to keep yourself at a level of stimulation that is healthy and enjoyable.



Long Term Physical Symptoms

(Over a period of a year or longer)

These occur when your body has been overexposed to stimulus over a long period. The symptoms listed to the right may show up and your health may start to deteriorate.

The internal symptoms of long term stress include:

- ☹️ Worry or anxiety
- ☹️ Confusion and an inability to concentrate or make decisions
- ☹️ Feeling ill
- ☹️ Feeling out of control or overwhelmed by events
- ☹️ Mood changes like:
 - ☹️ Depression
 - ☹️ Frustration
 - ☹️ Hostility
 - ☹️ Helplessness
 - ☹️ Impatience & irritability
 - ☹️ Restlessness
- ☹️ Being more lethargic
- ☹️ Difficulty sleeping



These symptoms of stress should not be taken in isolation. Other factors could cause them. However, if you find yourself exhibiting or recognizing a number of them, then it would be worth investigating stress management techniques or seeking the advice of your family doctor.

Short Term Physical Symptoms of Stress

- 🔔 Faster heart beat
- 🔔 Increased sweating
- 🔔 Cool skin
- 🔔 Cold hands and feet
- 🔔 Feelings of nausea (butterflies in the stomach)
- 🔔 Rapid breathing
- 🔔 Tense muscles
- 🔔 Dry mouth
- 🔔 A desire to urinate
- 🔔 Diarrhea

Long Term Physical Symptoms

- 🔔 Change in appetite
- 🔔 Frequent colds
- 🔔 Illnesses such as asthma, back pain, digestive problems, headaches, skin eruptions
- 🔔 Sexual disorders
- 🔔 Aches and pains
- 🔔 Feelings of intense and long-term tiredness